

**Before the State of South Carolina
Department of Insurance**

In the matter of:

Thomas P. Ziegler
106 Willow Creek Drive
Irmo, South Carolina 29063

File Number 2003-120284

**Consent order
Imposing Administrative Penalty**

This matter comes before me pursuant to an agreement entered into between the State of South Carolina Department of Insurance and Thomas P. Ziegler, a licensed South Carolina resident insurance producer.

Upon review of this matter, I hereby find as fact, that Mr. Ziegler, while licensed to do business as a resident insurance producer within the State of South Carolina for The Hartford Insurance Group, issued a worthless certificate of insurance to customer John Burnett, in that he failed to notify the Insurer that Mr. Burnett had not made the corresponding premium payments. As a result of Mr. Ziegler's inaction, the policy still remained in force and effect when John Burnett filed for Workers' Compensation on one of his employees. Mr. Ziegler acknowledges this and contends this failure resulted from inadvertence and oversight and not from any intent to avoid the requirements of the Law. Nevertheless, these actions can ultimately lead to the revocation of his license to transact the business of Insurance as a producer in South Carolina following a public hearing at the Administrative Law Judge Court.

Prior to the initiation of any administrative proceedings by the Department against him, Thomas Ziegler and the Department agreed to submit the entire matter to me, along with their specific recommendation, for my summary decision, rather than to proceed toward a formal public hearing. The consensual recommendation was that Mr. Ziegler would undergo a Polygraph Examination, assume all responsibility, waive his right to a public hearing, and immediately pay an administrative penalty through the Department in the amount of \$2,000.00. In lieu of seeking to revoke Mr. Ziegler's resident producer's license, the Department would also place him on Probation for one year.

Section 38-45-140 of the South Carolina Code grants the Director of Insurance the power to revoke an insurance broker's license for violating any of South Carolina's Insurance Laws. Similarly, §38-43-130 also provides the Director of Insurance with the authority to revoke a producer's license... "when it appears that a producer has violated this title or any regulation promulgated by the Department, or has willfully deceived or dealt unjustly with the citizens of this State." Subsection (C)(8) specifically defines "deceived or dealt unjustly with the citizens of this state" as not limited to action or inaction by the producer, when an agent has used fraudulent, coercive, or dishonest practices, or has demonstrated incompetence, untrustworthiness, or financial irresponsibility in the conduct of business in this State or elsewhere.

After a thorough review of the record, and pursuant to my findings of fact, I hereby conclude as a matter of law, that Thomas P. Ziegler has violated S.C. Code Ann. § 38-43-130(C)(8) (Supp. 2002). As a result, I can now take administrative disciplinary action against his resident insurance producer's license. However, under the discretionary authority provided to me within S.C. Code Ann. § 38-43-130 (Supp. 2002), and after carefully considering the recommendation of the parties, I hereby impose against Thomas Ziegler an administrative fine in the total amount of \$2,000.00 dollars and place him on Probation for a period of one year. Mr. Ziegler must pay the fine within ten days of the date of my signature upon this Consent Order. If he does not timely pay that total fine amount, or is found to be in violation of any of the State's Insurance Laws within that Probationary period, his resident insurance producer's license will be immediately revoked without any further disciplinary proceedings.

The parties have reached this agreement in consideration of the Department having never taken any administrative disciplinary action against Thomas P. Ziegler before, and of his assurance that in the future he will fully comply with the State's insurance laws. The parties expressly agree and understand that this resolution constitutes full accord and satisfaction of this matter.

By his signature upon this consent order, Thomas Ziegler acknowledges that he understands that this administrative disciplinary order is a public record subject to the disclosure requirements of the State of South Carolina's *Freedom of Information Act*, S.C. Code Ann. §§ 30-4-10, *et seq.* (1991 and Supp. 2002).

Nothing contained within this administrative disciplinary order should be construed to limit or to deprive any person of any private right of action under the law. Nothing contained within this administrative disciplinary order should be construed to limit, in any manner, the criminal jurisdiction of any law enforcement or judicial officer. Nothing contained within this administrative disciplinary order should be construed to limit the statutory duty of the Director of Insurance, exercised either directly or through the Department of Insurance, to "report to the Attorney General or other appropriate law enforcement officials criminal violations of the Law relative to the business of Insurance or the provisions of this Title which he considers necessary to report." S.C. Code Ann. § 38-3-110 (4) (Supp. 2002).

It is, therefore, ordered that Thomas Ziegler shall, within ten days of the date of my signature on this consent order, pay through the Department an administrative fine in the total amount of \$2,000.00 dollars and be placed under one year Probation..

It is further ordered that a copy of this consent order be immediately transmitted to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners for distribution to its member states and a copy be placed in Mr. Ziegler's licensing file.

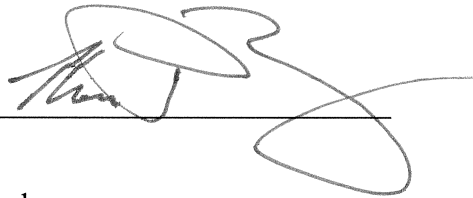
This order becomes effective as of the date of my signature below



Ernst N. Csiszar
Director

Jun
May, 2004, at
Columbia, South Carolina

I CONSENT: _____



Thomas P. Ziegler
106 Willow Creek Drive
Irmo, South Carolina 29063

Dated this day of May, 2004.